



Scottsdale reading program gives keystone to knowledge



The Scottsdale Charros support Southwest Human Development's Raising a Reader program. (Submitted photo)

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Many would agree knowledge is power.

But too few of us teach our children to gain the power of knowledge one most find value in the written word because without it we, as a society, might still believe the Earth is flat or never gained an understanding of a faith in our own terms.

The ability to read allows us, as a species, to tap into a new understanding of the world around us.

[Southwest Human Development](#), through its [Raising a Reader](#) program, seeks to instill in Scottsdale youngsters the idea that reading is a gateway to the ultimate power -- knowledge.

“Southwest Human Development launched the Raising A Reader program in Arizona to teach families the importance of building their children’s early literacy skills so that they can start school ready to learn, said Ryan Narramore, a Southwest Human Development spokesman.

“Introducing children to books and reading early in life is critical for their future success.”

The eight-week program provides low-income families the opportunity to participate in a variety of literacy-related activities such as reading, song, dance and more.

“Throughout the eight-week session, the families receive books that they can read with their children and start their own home library. In many cases, these books are the first things these young children have to call their own,” Mr. Narramore points out.

The [Scottsdale Charros](#) support the idea of preparing youngsters for early education with a focus on reading the printed word.

“The Charros support youth through sports and education. Raising a reader is designed to get our youngsters started off on the right foot,” said Scottsdale Charro Dr. Brad Brittain.

“So much of a child’s education, confidence, and self esteem comes from these early formative years. Raising a Reader is a program designed to keep kids from giving up before they’ve even given an effort. The true value in the raise a reader program is that it is designed for both the parent and the child to take part together.”

Last fiscal year, the Scottsdale Charros provided a \$5,000 grant providing funding for young mothers and their children at the Florence Crittenton Girls Ranch in south Scottsdale to participate in eight-week literacy program.

“Since Southwest Human Development started Raising A Reader in 2011, we’ve reached nearly 3,000 families,” Mr. Narramore explains.

“Results show that after participating in the program, parents feel more confident reading to their children, children ask their parents to read with them more often, and the families spend more time reading together.”

Without Charro dollars Mr. Narramore says families who now know the impact of early literacy might not feel the same way having not participated in the reading program.

“Thanks to the generosity of the Charros Foundation, Southwest Human Development’s early literacy specialists were able to teach and encourage these families to embrace reading and develop the skills necessary for their children to succeed in school,” he said.

“Time and time again, studies have shown that children whose families are coping with economic disadvantages, like those at the Florence Crittenton Girls Ranch, greatly benefit from the Raising A Reader program and other early childhood services.”

Dr. Brittain says the Charros are a force for good in the community -- and there is no sign of any slowing down anytime soon.

“The mission of the Charros is so pure and fundamental that I am confident my efforts to build a better community are increased, enhanced, and have a greater impact than I could do alone,” he said.

Go to www.swhd.org.

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